

UPDATE ON CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress to date with the previously reported work to improve customer service in relation to contacts on Roads and Amenity Services.
- 1.2 This work has contributed to some significant improvements in performance, although it should be noted that there is a difficulty in assessing impact due to seasonal variances. While, for example, the statistics in relation to missed bin contacts are much better than they were, this cannot solely be attributed to the improvements on the customer service side. Other factors contribute to the overall improvement such as improved service delivery and robust vehicle maintenance, as well as seasonal variances e.g. milder winters mean fewer routes down which consequently means fewer missed bin reports.
- 1.3 With over 75 individual work packages delivered in relation to individual customer service 'products' and their associated sub-processes and procedures, as well as a range of work on the Councillor Casebook, this has been a very detailed piece of work. Rather than delve into the minute detail, this report offers a thematic as opposed to a chronological or product by product update.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- Endorse this report and the overall approach; and
- Agree that a further report will come forward in 12 months

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides a brief update on the work to improve customer service in Roads and Amenity Services over the past two years. This work has focused on improving proactive information, making better use of technology and streamlining the procedures for handling enquiries when they do come in.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

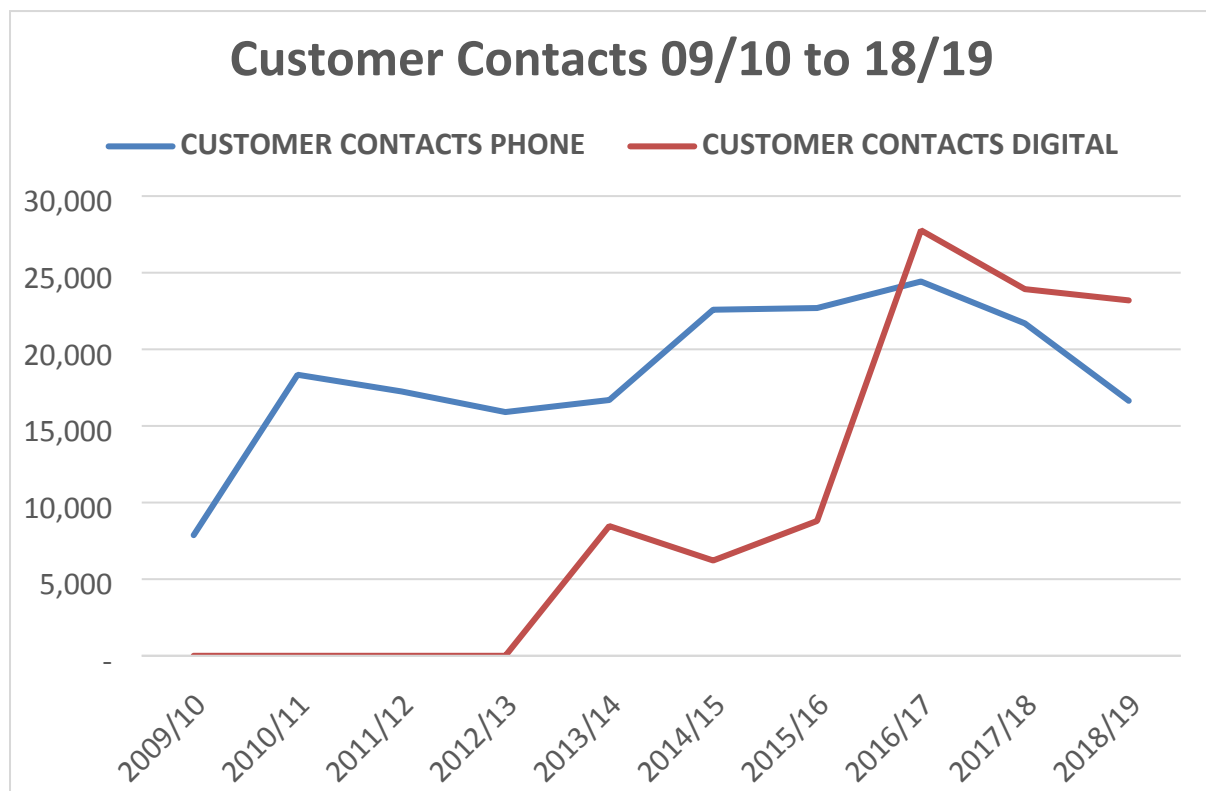
Members are asked to:

- 3.1 Endorse this report and the overall approach; and
- 3.2 Agree that a further report will come forward in 12 months

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

- 4.1 The graph below shows customer enquiries for Roads and Amenity Services over time. Enquiries peaked in 2016/17, with a steady reduction since. The number of phone calls received are at their lowest levels since 2012/13.

At peak, there were 24,426 phone calls registered as Roads and Amenity logged through the CRM system, compared to 16,640 in the last financial year. Digital contacts at their peak were 27,768, reducing to 23,193 in 2018/19.

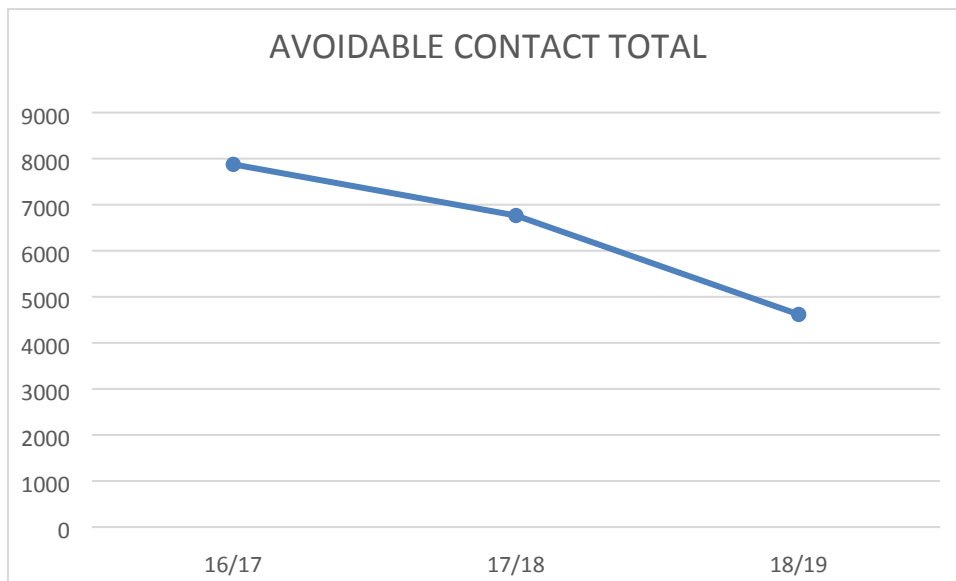


4.2 The Council records contacts which are considered to be 'avoidable' in nature. The current criteria for measuring these type of contacts are:

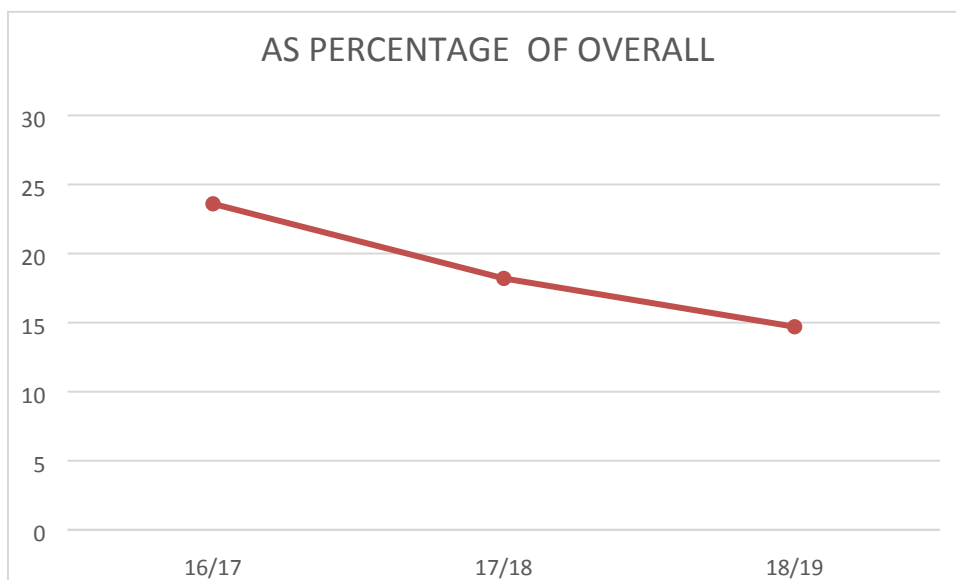
- Service delivery failure
- Equipment/system failure
- Information provision failure
- Information gathering failure
- Needless progress chasing
- Employee conduct
- Policy decisions

The avoidable contact statistics for Roads and Amenity are also showing a steady reduction, so as well as contacts overall reducing over time, the percentage of those contacts which are considered avoidable is also reducing.

7876 contacts were recorded as avoidable in 2016/17, compared to 4617 in 2018/19



24% of 16/17 enquiries were categorised as avoidable, compared to 15% in 18/19



- 4.3 On the Councillor Casebook, hardly any enquiries are now breaching the first stage response timeframes, and on a monthly basis generally more enquiries are being closed than are being opened, meaning that the overall backlog is being cleared. There were around 500 enquiries live in the system as of the end of June 2018, with this number now more around the 200 mark. This means that enquiries are being closed off quicker, and Members are getting the answers they need in a much tighter timeframe.
- 4.4 As part of the overall focus on improvement, an analysis of the enquiries received has shown that many enquiries are currently defined as 'Awaiting Resolution' but which cannot be delivered at this point in time within the current policy, budget and resource framework. It is possible that they could be delivered or resolved through future works programmes and budget allocations, but a more precise timescale can't be identified at this stage. To capture these enquiries accurately and to give better visibility to Members we have introduced a new category called Future Programme. These outstanding issues will be reviewed by officers when agreeing annual work programmes and updates can

be provided in the future if there is an identified way of delivering the original request. Councillors will be able to monitor enquiries through the Casebook dashboard.

5.0 COUNCILLOR CASEBOOK IMPROVEMENTS – TIMELINESS; CONSISTENCY; QUALITY; BALANCE.

- 5.1 **Service redesign** – a significant service redesign has successfully concluded within Roads and Amenity Services. A central control Hub is now in place and developing asset management, programming and planning; budget control and serving the role of an information centre. The hub manages customer service functions which includes closing the loop on communications, proactive information, channel shift, using innovation/technology and maximising automation.
- 5.2 **Recruitment** – in the 2018 budget round funding was allocated for two customer liaison posts. These posts, along with the post of business support team leader as part of the service redesign, have been successfully recruited to. These customer focussed staff sit alongside technical staff in the Hub, working collaboratively to answer enquiries consistently and timeously. There are updated procedures in place to support this.
- 5.3 **Proactive briefings** – briefing notes on key issues are being provided (such as the winter service briefing). These are in a format which then allow Members to use these as tools for answering common constituent enquiries which they receive. Anecdotal feedback on these has been positive.
- 5.4 **Improved responses** – commonly raised issues have a limited number of possible resolutions, so model answers have been developed which can be amended to suit particular issues. These provide well-structured responses, comprehensive and sensitive in the information they provide, in a style suited to onward transmission to constituents.
- 5.5 **Easy access to library information** – individual responses are stored on the system in an easily searchable format which allows the central team to make easy use of previous responses, saving time and effort in writing new responses for every new enquiry.
- 5.6 **Quality assurance** – a quality assurance panel, separate from the day-to-day central team, has been established to independently scrutinise random samples of enquires, with a view to offering constructive feedback to help drive improvement and consistency. Meeting on a weekly basis, this group was initially making fairly significant interventions to the sample responses. Over time those interventions have reduced to such an extent that the group is now satisfied enough to change the frequency of the review to monthly. This will be monitored and if there is any regression in quality then the group can resume weekly audits.

6.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE

6.1 CONTEXT

- 6.1.1 The Council's CRM system previously had around 30 specific categories for Roads and Amenity enquiries, giving an indication of the wide range of services provided which can generate customer contact. These were individually reviewed on the basis of making any changes/improvements at the most appropriate point on the following axis, with an overall focus on pushing out proactive information:



- 6.1.2 The work has focussed on road faults; winter; bin orders; missed bins; assisted collections; food waste; commercial waste; bulky waste and general enquiries.
- 6.1.3 As a result of this piece of work, there are now nearer 50 individual Roads and Amenity categories in the CRM system. This was as a result of analysis of those contacts registered as general enquiries. With more categories specifically matched to the types of enquiries received, each with their own individual processes and procedures, it means that these customer contacts can be better managed, which is to everyone's benefit.
- 6.2 **Front end** – some notable changes to the front end include a new '48 hour' missed bin protocol; revised scripts with key 'gateway' questions; revised logic focussed webforms to filter enquires; as well as the development of the new categories mentioned above and the use of winter weather cameras.
- 6.3 **Business support** – the business support team has made some significant changes to the way they do things, including using the CRM system as a central caseload management database for waste related services, rather than working off separate systems; closing the loop on enquiries with autoresponse options when closing cases; inputting customer enquiries direct to the asset management systems and being proactive with key service delivery information, such as using the website and the Outreach email system for services disruptions.
- 6.4 **Service delivery** – operational staff have contributed to the overall improvements by providing better, more timely information on service issues; publishing daily winter actions plans; developing publishable programmes of work and providing information when required to close off enquiries.
- 6.5 **Procedural** – the most notable change to procedures is around the ordering of food waste bin liners, which has changed from a labour intensive individualised ordering process with numerous touchpoints for customers and reactive driven service to one where customers simply tie a bag round their food bin when they are putting it out for collection to signal the bin crews that they require more liners. This allows the order to be fulfilled instantly, and crucially, while the bin crews are there as part of the normal course of their business. This has been a significant contributing factor to the overall reduction in contacts noted at 4.1.

- 6.6 **System integration** – work has been underway to integrate the roads asset management system WDM with the Oracle CRM system to allow automated updates to be provided by email to customers on their road fault enquiries. The integration should increase customer satisfaction and reduce follow-up enquiries. This is a complex piece of work, with the Council largely reliant on the system suppliers, with the result that it has taken longer than anticipated to go live. At the time of writing the integration has just gone live.
- 6.7 **Publishing programmes of work** – Publishing programmes of work is an aspiration of the Control Hub, which has now been successfully established as part of the overall service redesign. Members will have seen the detailed Capital Programme which was recently circulated. At present we are in the process of refining this data to make it customer friendly. We will then be able to publish it on the Council website, and make it a stage in the road fault reporting process so that customers can see which roads are scheduled for works so that they might not then need to log a fault/enquiry. This will also be made available to call centre staff. We will gauge the effectiveness of the publishing of this particular programme over the summer, which will help us form plans for the publishing of other information of interest to our customers.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 As well as continuously monitoring and reviewing the improvements to date, refining and building upon these as required, specific workstreams have been identified:

Workstream	Description	Anticipated benefits	Status	Next milestone
Events booking system	Formalise process, giving clarity for applicants and reducing administrative burden	Anticipate significantly improved customer experience; reduced workload for staff; potential to increase income from events.	Scoping stage.	Paper to DMT to confirm project scope etc. and next steps (June)
Bulky uplifts item based pricing	Proposal to move from current time based model to item based model	Greater clarity for customers; reduced follow up contact; easier process to administer; increased	Developing new policy/ business case	Paper to DMT/SMT/ Council (September)

		income		
Commercial waste review	Proposal to capture more information on Oracle/ automate as far as possible	Contract admin should be easier, with the result that income recovery should be greater.	Audit complete and agreed.	Report on progress with audit recommendations July/August

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 A significant amount of work has been undertaken to make improvements to customer service on high priority Roads and Amenity customer contacts. Although difficult to measure impact precisely, the table at 4.1 shows that overall contacts have reduced, with this work surely being a contributing factor to the positive statistics. As the Hub develops, what is presently in place should be refined and built upon over time.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Policy - none
- 9.2 Financial – none
- 9.3 Legal – none
- 9.4 HR – none
- 9.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty - none
- 9.6 Risk – none
- 9.7 Customer Service – consistent with the Council’s wider focus on customer service improvement, engagement and transformation

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29/5/19

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